

EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – JANUARY 2, 2019

TAMIL NADU

- **Tamil Nadu Government – to develop Thuthukkudi (Tuticorin) Airport as the fifth international airport in the state within a period of 4 years**



- ✓ As the first step, night landing facilities will commence from Thuthukudi by May 2018
- ✓ International flights are already being operated from 4 airports of the state including Chennai, Coimbatore, Madurai and Trichy
- **Tamil Nadu – ranked 2nd in the areas of Health and well-being – as per the sustainable development goals report released by NITI Aayog in December 2018**
- ✓ While Kerala topped the charts with 92 points, Tamil Nadu had 77 points compared to the national average of 52
- ✓ Telangana stood third with 73 points followed by Punjab with 71 points
- ✓ The maternal mortality ratio (MMR) of the state was 66 per 1 lakh births compared to the national average of 130.
- ✓ Kerala has a maternal mortality ratio of 46 and Maharashtra has 61
- ✓ The three states have achieved the country's target of reducing the ratio to 70 by 2030

- **Consumers Association of India (CAI) - has launched a new helpline number 044-24493443 - available between 10 am and 5.30 pm on weekdays**
- ✓ It will provide free information and independent advice to all consumers on how to handle problems arising in their day to day dealings with traders, manufacturers, banks and other service providers
- ✓ Enquiries and complaints can also be sent through the email legal@caiindia.org

STATES

- **Uttar Pradesh government – to levy a new ‘gau kalyan’ or cow welfare cess, a 0.5% additional levy on excise items**



- ✓ It will be imposed on items such as alcohol apart from toll tax, buildings and bridges
- ✓ It will be used to fund construction and maintenance of cow shelters across the state
- **Uttar Pradesh – to levy Spot fines for Open defecation in Kanpur**
- ✓ Kanpur municipal corporation (KMC) has fixed spot fines for two types of ‘offences’ -
 - ✓ a fine of Rs 200 if a person is caught urinating in public
 - ✓ a fine of Rs 500 for defecating in the open
- ✓ The district was declared open defecation free by President Ram Nath Kovind on October 1, 2017

NATIONAL

- **Union Government - approved the proposal to rename ‘Allahabad’ as ‘Prayagraj’ by the Uttar Pradesh Government**
- ✓ The name of Allahabad traces its origin to ‘Illahabad’ (Abode of God), as named by the 16th century Mughal Emperor, Akbar
- ✓ His grandson Shah Jahan renamed the entire city as ‘Allahabad’
- ✓ Before the renaming, the city was known as ‘Prayag’
- ✓ Abul Fazl, the Court historian of Akbar called the city as ‘Piyag’ in his literary texts
- ✓ The UP government had earlier changed the name of Allahabad to Prayagraj by its order dated October 18, 2018
- ✓ It had also renamed Mughalsarai railway station as ‘Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyay’ Junction recently

- **Vanitha Mathil, a Women's wall – was formed in Kerala by around 35 lakh women standing shoulder to shoulder across the length of the state**



- ✓ The wall stretched from Kasaragod in the north to Thiruvananthapuram in the south for about 620 Kms
 - ✓ Kerala Health Minister, KK Shailaja became the first block of the chain in Kasaragod while CPI(M) Politburo member, Brinda Karat formed the final block in Thiruvananthapuram
 - ✓ With close to 35 lakh women attending the event, it is believed to be the largest women's gathering in the world
 - ✓ The event was organised by the Government of Kerala with the support of several other groups
 - ✓ During the event, participants took a pledge to protect the values of Kerala's renaissance and uphold gender equality
 - ✓ A parallel 'Solidarity Wall' was formed by men in Kozhikode
- **ISRO – has launched an outreach programme called 'Samvad with Students'**



- ✓ As part of the programme, ISRO's chairman, K Sivan interacted with 40 students and 10 teachers from select schools on January 1, 2019 – discussing about wide range of topics like rockets, satellites, Chandrayaan and Gaganyaan
- ✓ The outreach programme was aimed at motivating young India to tap their scientific potential
- ✓ Other ISRO efforts for Students
- ✓ Isro will organise guided tours thrice in a year, especially during summer and Christmas holidays for students of class 11 and class 12
- ✓ It plans to take the students to its facilities in Thiruvananthapuram and Bengaluru and the launch centre at Sriharikota
- ✓ Students would also be taken to space laboratories and allowed to make small satellites there

➤ **Andhra Pradesh and Telangana to have separate High Courts from January 1, 2019**

- ✓ Andhra Pradesh and Telangana - had a common high court at Hyderabad, the capital city of Telangana, since the bifurcation of the state on June 2, 2014
- ✓ 16 judges have been allocated to Andhra Pradesh High Court and 10 to Telangana High Court



- ✓ Justice T B N Radhakrishnan was sworn in as the first Chief Justice of the Telangana High Court at Hyderabad
- ✓ Earlier, he was appointed as the Chief Justice of the High Court of Judicature at Hyderabad for both the states of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh in July 2018
- ✓ A new High Court of Andhra Pradesh has been created from January 1 to function at Amaravati, the capital city of Andhra Pradesh
- ✓ With the creation of this new high court, the country now has 25 high courts
- ✓ Justice Ramesh Ranganathan, who is at present the Chief Justice of Uttarakhand High Court, will head the new Andhra Pradesh high court

➤ **100 days of Ayushman Bharat**

- ✓ **Union Government – announced that 6.85 lakh patients have been provided hospital treatment and an average 5,000 claims are being settled every day – as the launch of Ayushman Bharat crosses 100 days**



- ✓ The scheme was rolled out on September 23, 2018 in Ranchi, Jharkhand
- ✓ It aims to provide an annual health cover of Rs 5 lakh per family to around 50 crore beneficiaries from nearly 10.74 crore deprived families
- ✓ Currently, over 16,000 public and private hospitals are empanelled under the scheme

- **Babies born on New Year's Day, January 1, 2019**
- ✓ **According to UNICEF, an estimated 3,95,072 babies were born around the world on New Year's Day**
- ✓ **Of those, 25% were born in South Asia alone with India topping with 69,944 babies accounting for 17.7% of the total newborns**
- ✓ **Country-wise breakup of Babies**
 - ✓ **India - 69,944**
 - ✓ **China - 44,940**
 - ✓ **Nigeria - 25,685**
 - ✓ **Pakistan - 15,112**
 - ✓ **Indonesia - 13,256**
 - ✓ **The United States of America - 11,086**
 - ✓ **The Democratic Republic of Congo - 10,053**
 - ✓ **Bangladesh - 8,428**
- ✓ **UNICEF will celebrate the year 2019 as the 30th anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child**
- ✓ **UNICEF**
- ✓ **UNICEF - The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund**
- ✓ **Created - by the United Nations General Assembly on 11 December 1946**
- ✓ **Headquarters – New York, United States**
- ✓ **Objective - to provide emergency food and healthcare to children in World War II ravaged countries**

INTERNATIONAL

- **Pakistan - has decided to launch 'Panda Bonds' in Chinese Yuan currency - to raise loans from Chinese capital markets**



- ✓ **Thus, the country intends to give the Chinese currency a status 'at par with' that of the US dollar**
- ✓ **The strategy is mainly to bridge the foreign financing needs and build foreign exchange reserves in the country**

- ✓ From these bonds, it expects to raise \$500 million to \$1 billion in different tranches
- ✓ The size, tenure and pricing would be determined on the basis of market response at the time of issuance
- ✓ In recent years, China has become Pakistan's largest trading partner and also the country with which it has the highest trade deficit
- ✓ The first two Panda bonds were issued in October 2005 - by the International Finance Corporation and the Asian Development Bank
- ✓ Philippines issued its inaugural Panda bonds in 2018, thereby becoming the first ASEAN member to do so

COMMITTEES

➤ **B V R Mohan Reddy Committee Recommendations to All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE)**



- ✓ To stop setting up new colleges from 2020 and review the new capacity every year
- ✓ No additional seats should be approved in traditional engineering areas such as mechanical, electrical, civil and electronics
- ✓ To encourage institutes to convert current capacity in traditional disciplines to emerging new technologies
- ✓ To introduce undergraduate engineering programs exclusively for artificial intelligence, the block chain, robotics, quantum computing, data sciences etc
- ✓ Regarding additional seats in existing institutions, the approvals should be based on the capacity utilization of concerned institute
- ✓ **Background**
- ✓ As per an earlier survey, 51% of the seats were falling vacant every year - out of the 15.5 lakh B.E/B.Tech seats in 3,291 engineering colleges across the country
- ✓ The investigation found that these vacant seats were due to the college's poor infrastructure, labs, faculty along with poor linkages with the industry and the absence of a technological ecosystem
- ✓ For improving the situation, a committee was constituted to come up with solutions to expand the engineering education under B V R Mohan Reddy
- ✓ B V R Mohan Reddy, former NASSCOM chairperson and industrialist, is the current Chairman of IIT Hyderabad

PERSONALITIES

- **Bindu, 44, from Perinthalmanna and Kanaka Durga, 42, from Kannur – became the first Woman devotees between the age group of 10-50 – to enter the Sabarimala temple at 3.45 am on January 2, 2019**



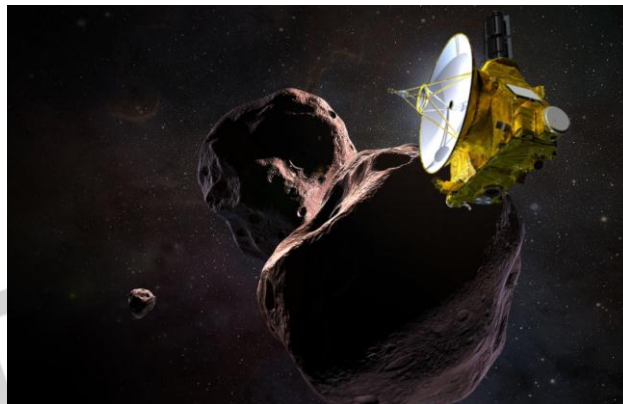
- ✓ The two women were accompanied by a group of policemen in civil uniform
 - ✓ Bindu and Kanakadurga had tried visiting the temple late last month too, but failed amidst massive protests
 - ✓ The Supreme Court had earlier thrown open the temple for all the woman devotees on September 28, 2018 which was implemented by the temple on October 17, 2018
- **Arav Ajaykumar, an eight year old Indian-origin boy - got a gold award and the top marks in his school - for the 'Primary Mathematics Challenge' a logical reasoning test organized by the Mathematical Association**



- ✓ Arav, a Class IV student, is from Leicester, UK, where his parents moved in 2009 from Mumbai
- ✓ His mother Varsha Ajaykumar, was raised in Bandra and used to work as a radiologist at the Advanced Radiology Centre in Andheri
- ✓ The Primary Maths Challenge is aimed at older kids in Class 5 and 6
- ✓ Arav was born in the UK and at the age of two could count to 1,000
- ✓ Arav had already entered Mensa with an IQ of 152 at the age of four

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

- **ISRO – to launch 32 missions in the year 2019 (14 rockets or launch vehicles, 17 satellites and one tech demo mission)**
- ✓ These rockets will include GSLV Mk III for Chandrayaan-2, which will be the 25th mission from the second launch pad at Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota
- ✓ ISRO also plans to celebrate the centenary birth anniversary of Vikram A Sarabhai, the founding father of Indian Space Programme from August 12, 2019
- **NASA's New Horizons spacecraft – completes a historic flyby of Ultima Thule, the most distant object ever visited by a spacecraft – on January 1, 2019**



- ✓ Ultima Thule (officially designated 2014 MU69) lies at a distance of 4 billion miles (6 billion kilometers) from Earth in the Kuiper belt of our solar system, beyond the part inhabited by planets
- ✓ The spacecraft zoomed within a mere 2,200 miles (3,500 km) of Ultima — more than three times closer than New Horizons got to Pluto, which also lies in the Kuiper belt in July 2015
- ✓ The approximate size of MU69 is about 35 x 15 kilometres
- ✓ Kuiper belt is a band of dwarf planets, space rocks and icy debris left over from the formation of the solar system 4.6 billion years ago.
- ✓ The Spacecraft New Horizons was launched from Earth in 2006
- ✓ An Indian scientist, Shyam Bhaskaran of Nasa's Jet Propulsion Laboratory is playing a key role in navigating the spacecraft
- ✓ On December 31, NASA's OSIRIS-REx spacecraft successfully moved into orbit around the smallest space body yet, a near-Earth asteroid called Bennu

ECONOMY

- **Reserve Bank of India (RBI) - has launched 'Survey on Retail Payment Habits of Individuals' (SRPHi) – to capture the retail payment habits of people in the cities of Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, Bengaluru and Guwahati**
- ✓ It has engaged Sigma Research & Consulting Pvt Ltd – to conduct the field work for the survey
- ✓ The survey will cover a sample of 6,000 individuals from various socio-economic backgrounds

APPOINTMENTS

- **Justice AK Sikri – appointed as Executive Chairman of National Legal Services Authority (NALSA)**



- ✓ He replaces Justice Madan B Lokur, who retired recently on December 14, 2018
- ✓ NALSA
- ✓ It was constituted under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987
- ✓ It provides free legal services to the weaker sections of the society
- ✓ It also organises Lok Adalats for amicable settlement of disputes
- ✓ The Chief Justice of India is its Patron-in-Chief
- ✓ The senior-most judge in the SC traditionally takes over as the Executive Chairman of the Authority
- ✓ Justice Arjan Kumar Sikri
- ✓ He became the judge of Supreme Court in April 2013
- ✓ Earlier, he had served as the Chief Justice of the Punjab and Haryana High Court
- ✓ Initially, he was appointed as Judge of the High Court of Delhi in July, 1999
- ✓ Sikri was chosen as one of the 50 most influential persons in Intellectual Property in the world - in a survey conducted by Managing Intellectual Property Association (MIPA) for 2007
- ✓ He was also a part-time lecturer in Campus Law Centre, Delhi University during 1984-89

- **Pramod Kumar Singh - appointed as secretary of the Competition Commission of India (CCI)**
- ✓ Prior to this, he was the Adviser (law) in the CCI
- ✓ The secretary would act as the Nodal officer for making or receiving all statutory information apart from signing of MoU's with other agencies
- ✓ The Commission was established in 2003 to replace the erstwhile Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices Commission
- ✓ It draws its power from the Competition Act, 2002
- ✓ It has been empowered to check anti-competitive behaviour and regulate mergers and acquisitions

